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TAGS: [IS](#) [KPAL](#) [PREL](#) [XF](#) [ISRAELI](#) [PALESTINIAN](#) [AFFAIRS](#)

SUBJECT: (C) ISRAELI PRIME MINISTRY AND DEFENSE MINISTRY
OFFICIALS COMMENT ON UP-TICK IN PALESTINIAN VIOLENCE

Classified By: Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[11.](#) (C) BG Eitan Dangott, Defense Minister Mofaz's Military Secretary, told the Ambassador late afternoon June 7 that the

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IDF is on alert and will act immediately if Palestinians are seen preparing further mortar or Qassam attacks in Gaza. Dangott hinted, but would not be pinned down, that the IDF would not retaliate for the numerous attacks perpetrated during the day by Palestinians in Gaza. After reviewing the Qassam attack by Hamas against the Israeli town of Sderot during the morning, which damaged a house and resulted in three people hospitalized for shock, and the late afternoon mortar attack, probably by Hamas, against the settlement of Ganei Tal which reportedly resulted in the deaths of a Palestinian and a Chinese worker, Dangott said that the situation cannot continue in which Hamas or the Palestine Islamic Jihad launches attacks and the Palestinian Authority does nothing. He said that he had spoken directly during the day with Palestinian Interior Minister Nassir Yousef and had also reinforced the message in a conversation with Palestinian Civil Affairs Minister Mohammed Dahlan.

[12.](#) (C) Dangott said that the Israeli Government is concerned that, since PA President Abbas' visit to Washington, Palestinian officials have conducted themselves as though they expected no pressure from Washington to act against terrorism. The Ambassador disputed this strongly, saying that General Ward, Consulate General officials and Washington-based officials have made clear to the most senior levels of the PA that they must act against the terrorists and stop the Qassam and rocket attacks. General Ward and our Acting Consul General had delivered strong messages today to Yousef and other senior Palestinian officials. Dangott replied that Israel has not seen evidence of this, but he accepted the argument that the U.S. is trying to dispel Palestinian perceptions regarding U.S. attitudes. Dangott also noted that Mofaz is weighing whether to cancel a scheduled meeting set for late night June 7 with Interior Minister Yousef. The Ambassador said that the Secretary would very much like that meeting to take place, in that she has argued for using bilateral security channels to deal with these issues. Dangott said he would pass this to Mofaz.

[13.](#) (C) Previously, Prime Minister Sharon's Foreign Policy Advisor, Shalom Tourgeman, told the Ambassador that the attack on Sderot would likely evoke a prompt Israeli response and would lead the Israelis to question the utility of bilateral meetings with Palestinian officials. He said, speaking on behalf of the Prime Minister, that President Abbas' travels made it appear that he was running away from the problem. Also, Interior Minister Yousef was proving ineffective in dealing with Hamas attacks against Israel. In response, based on consultations with Washington, the Ambassador urged Israel not to react to Palestinian attacks as though Israel did not have a partner. He noted that this is not "the Arafat era" and that the Israelis should act in a restrained fashion and use their bilateral contacts with the Palestinians to try to deal with the security situation. Tourgeman subsequently called to say that he had passed this message to the Prime Minister, but the steady stream of rocket attacks throughout the day undermined the viability of pursuing this course. Further, Tourgeman said, the Palestinians are tending to avoid progress in the bilateral channels in the belief that they can gain more by waiting for an outside envoy. He pointed to the failure of the mid-level disengagement coordination meeting yesterday as evidence that Palestinians had no intention of making progress during the week when they expected meetings with Quartet envoy Wolfensohn.

[14.](#) (C) Comment: While it appeared this morning that Israel would retaliate immediately for the Qassam attack against Sderot, following extensive consultations within the Israeli defense establishment the GOI appears to have decided to remain on alert in order to preempt further attacks. There is no question, however, that tensions have heightened considerably as a result of persistent Hamas and PIJ attacks and the failure of the PA security forces to take any action to prevent those attacks or arrest those responsible. It is only a question of when, not whether, an attack by Hamas or

PIJ will cause enough casualties or damage to prompt a significant Israeli response.

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